

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

A Review of the Underpinnings of Management and Human Resource Management

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Abstract:

As a management function, human resource management has been widely documented as playing a fundamental role in designing and bringing about the changes that have given rise to 'labour market flexibility'. As a result, there is an exponential growth of human economic expansion that has had a devastating effect on the environment and the world's natural resources. This diversity makes it even more important to understand the numerous different theories underpinning Human Resource Management (HRM) and to explore the outcome of Human Resource (HR) practices on organizations, managers and workers and wider society. This paper reviews some pertinent literature in management and human resource management and further proposes the significance of talent management in the theory and practice of management and human resource management.

Keywords: Human resource management, management, review, management theory and practice

1. Introduction

Human Resource Management Practices (HRMPs) have been changing over the last decade. These changes have been introduced at different times and in different political and economic contexts and have been accepted or opposed by workers and even managers in different ways and to different degrees (Atzeni, 2014). Recent studies have drawn attention to the effect of the human factor on sustainable development and resource preservation (Pfeffer, 2010; Speth, 2010). With the increasing focus on social responsibility and sustainable performance, organizations have set themselves new goals other than mere financial profit, such as a commitment to social and environmental outcomes (Elkington, 1997). Despite the importance of human resource management practices, mainstream coverage of human resource management exhibits a 'dominance of consensus-oriented discourse' that is predominantly managerial in outlook, strategic and prescriptive (Keegan & Boselie, 2006). Organizations are facing numerous challenges arising from the societal turbulence and the demand of the new millennium. These challenges are contributing great challenges to the business owners and managers to build the organization to compete effectively in the context of such turbulence. Therefore, a review of the underpinning of human resource management theory and practice is very pertinent to today's turbulent environment. To do this, we will first turn to management theory which underpins human resource management.

2. Management Theory

Martinez *et al.* (2021) considered Frederick Taylor as among the pioneers of the management theory. He developed the concept of modern management in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Taylor replaced 'the one best' practice with the 'rule of thumb'. His successor Max Weber introduced the bureaucratic theory and his contemporary Henri Fayol introduced the administrative theory. Weber believed that the changing civilization seeks technically optimal results at the expense of emotional or humanistic content. On the other side, Henri Fayol's administrative theory focused on the personnel duties of the management. Fayol believed that management should stand on the five basic principles, such as forecast and planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling. Furthermore, Fayol developed fourteen primary roles of the management, namely: 1) division of labour, 2) authority, 3) unity of command, 4) discipline, 5) subordination, 6) remuneration, 7) line of authority, 8) centralization, 9) order, 10) stability of tenure, 11) equity, 12) initiative, 13) unity of direction and 14) the esprit de corps (Olum, 2004). The recent management theory deals with the

situational or contingency theory, system approach, chaos theory and team building theory. According to situational/contingency theory, management should pay attention to all the aspects of the current situation (OMOLUABI, 2016). System theory manifests the collection of parts to be unified to accomplish the organizational goal. Chaos theory takes into account the global events or circumstances that are equally chaotic in organizations. This theory suggests that the systems go through more complexity and become volatile (Vlaicu, 2015). Team building theory emphasizes the best practices of organizational members working together, and the consequent quality circles and continuous improvement (Olum, 2004). From the preceding discussion, it can be concluded that the gradual development of management theory arrives in a systematic process such as division of labour, authority, unity of command, discipline, subordination, remuneration, line of authority, centralization, order, stability of tenure, equity, initiative, unity of direction and the esprit de corps. But the situational/contingency theory seems to reveal the most pragmatic management approach by covering all the aspects of the current situation. And the teambuilding theory segregates the management according to the needs of the organization. In this segregation, human resource management plays an important role. Below, we select pertinent human resource management theories to review and discuss.

3. Human Resource Management Theories

From a theoretical point of view, human resource management has been addressed from various perspectives, such as institutional theory (DiMaggio, 1983; Scott, 1987), stakeholder theory (Freeman, 1984), paradox theory (Poole and Ven, 1989), risk society theory (Beck, 1992), organizational development theory (Porras & Robertson, 1986), system theory (Bertalanffy, 1950), a resource-based view (Wernerfelt, 1984) and signalling theory (Spence, 1973). It must be noted that talent management is the one of the most often cited aspects applied in literature, given that it provides a conceptual model that clarifies the strategies and implications of the human resource functions that promote sustainable performance (Gholami *et al.*, 2016; Guerri *et al.*, 2016; Renwick *et al.*, 2015, 2013; Stone, 2000). In the following paragraphs, we summarize the theories addressing the nexus between human resource management and sustainability.

According to the stakeholder paradigm, the linkage between human resource management and sustainability is based on an "open-system" approach established by the interconnectedness and interaction of various actors such as stakeholders, regulators, and social and environmental agents (Benn & Bolton, 2011). As stated by Schuler and Jackson (2005), the stakeholder framework covers both internal and external organizational interactions and responsibilities. They indicate that human resource management strategies must not only fulfil the interests of employees but must also match the needs of all the stakeholders. In this context, the principles of this theory highlight the importance of the social engagement and involvement of the actors mentioned above in the business field. The interactive approach accommodates a wider spectrum of values and activities addressing collective concerns (Kramar, 2014), and therefore justifies the convergence of practices between human resource management and sustainability.

From the perspective of resource allocation, many scholars adopt the resource-based view (RBV) theory to validate the bridge connecting human resource management and sustainability, as both are directly related to resource-oriented strategies and management (Arulrajah & Opatha, 2016; Florea *et al.*, 2012; Nejati *et al.*, 2017). The RBV theory postulates that when the HR division incorporates sustainable practices associated with the labour force (i.e., involvement, motivation, retention, and empowerment), it induces an added value to the firm, both financial and non-financial (Barney, 1991; Gong *et al.*, 2009). According to the RBV framework, the development of human competencies and skills and the safeguarding of natural resources are recognized as core factors for generating a competitive advantage (Arulrajah & Opatha, 2016; Bowman & Ambrosini, 2000; Lockett *et al.*, 2009).

As for the operationalization of human resource management, the institutional theory provides a clear explanation of how HR functions integrate the "greening" process of the organization (Arulrajah & Opatha, 2016). This theory validates the implementation of sustainability as a response to external pressures exerted by the government and the civic community (Russo and Fouts, 1997). According to the institutional approach, the adoption of human resource management is accomplished in two stages: legitimization at the institutional level, and formalization at the departmental level, through green HR tasks (Arulrajah & Opatha, 2016). The institutional paradigm is perceived as an aspect of the "goodness-of-fit" between ecosystems and HR systems, satisfying the communal needs of both internal and external organizational actors (Germain & Gitterman, 1995; Greene, 1999). Similarly, system theory describes human resource management as a sub-system that interacts with the environment and society to establish the viability and credibility of the organization (Jackson and Schuler, 1995). For instance, it suggests that human resource management can achieve better sustainable performance and green practices by retaining employees, developing green skills, and enhancing proactive attitudes toward social and environmental matters.

Furthermore, the talent management process has a key role in the success factor of human resources management today. The changing marketplace, as well as the organizational environment, emphasizes the improvement of the production and service delivery process by enhancing the ability of the people. Towards this end, enhancing employee management techniques, improving products and services, and reducing cost and sustainability are becoming the prime issues to be addressed. Thus, the concept of human resource management theory has come into importance. Human resource management theory embodies the integration of the dependency theory, competitive advantage theory, general system theory, organizational lifecycle theory, organizational change theory, change and performance theory, transaction cost theory, strategic contingency theory and organizational learning theory (Itika, 2011). We now turn to human resource management in practice.

4. Human Resource Management Practices

Worldwide, human resource management practices are going through serious challenges in the past few years. Human resource management practitioners must deal with employee shortage, employment of foreign workers, change in employment regulations, change in business strategy, change in the global business environment, globalization of the workforce, change in the business environment, and employee centrality which requires highly competent human resource management practices (ILO, 2019). There is no more room for trial and error, and there is no time to reinvent the wheel. Human resource management practitioners are expected to fully be equipped with the skills, knowledge and capabilities (Carroll, 1991).

Youndt and Snell (2014) define that the specific human resource management practices, that include the skill, abilities, competencies and knowledge, can enhance human capital. Aptitudes, information and capacities overseen by human resource management can influence an organization's financials. Human capital management provides opportunities for the organization to focus on the intellectual aspect of the company's capital. Human growth is the collective knowledge, skill, creativity and ability of the company's employees to improve the quality of work and take on greater responsibilities. It also includes the values, culture and philosophy of the company. In several industries, observers call the human resource management practitioner's role as the last bastion of the organization (Susan, 2015). Customarily, the job of the human resource management practitioner in numerous organizations has been to fill in as the controlling and policing arm of the official administration. Currently, human resource management practitioners have been forced to deliver more than what has been customarily in the past. It is incumbent then that human resource management roles should take a higher level of organizational recognition and course, be reorganized to make them compatible with the rapidly changing environment (Jyoti & Rani, 2014).

The human resource management practitioner's role has gone from the customary job to a 'vital colleague' and is now at the table with money, activities and different business communities of the organization (Huselid *et al.*, 1997). Since all the activities in the organization are controlled by human endeavours, it becomes incumbent upon human resource practitioners to guarantee that the business gets the most output from its people resources. Human resource management practitioners needed to give an exceptional yield on the business' investment in its talents. They need to be thinkers and doers at the same time. Expertise, not seniority is important, and therefore human resource management practitioners need to acquire skills to execute their tasks and responsibilities. Thus, seniority has become secondary (Sparrow, 2019).

Robinson and Robinson (2014) argue that times have changed, and organizations are now operating in more complex, competitive and challenging environments. Many of the direct challenges focus on the business side, resulting in human resource management practices. The demands placed on human resource management executives and those working internally have changed dramatically. Carroll (1991) said the roles of human resource management practitioners are delegators, technical experts, and innovators. In addition to more traditional requirements, as well as recruitment, compensation, and training, the human resource management department is expected to operate strategically and effectively. Strategically, this means human resource management must use its time and resources to improve workflows to maximize organizational outcomes.

Jeanete (2018) found that human resource management practices are actively warming to the role of strategically building a competitive organization and being responsible for implementing the plan. Human resource management practitioners must know the commercial approach of the company, participate in developing the guiding principles of the organization and change the thinking from being a cost-centre to a profit-centre. Human resource management practitioners should become the change agents to elevate business competitiveness by combining multiple roles such as being a strategic business partner, to be an administrative expert and to be an employee champion (Huselid *et al.*, 1997).

In the past, personnel management practices have been responsible for implementing operational processes that ensure the highest human resource management standards are applied to organizations. However, the needs of the organization have changed; the organization does not expect human resource management just to meet its traditional obligations, but to offer new solutions, processes and policies to increase the competitive advantage of the organization. Responsibility for human resource management practices should enable organizations to be aware of the highest standards of management and to need changes to meet organizational competitiveness (Huselid *et al.*, 1997).

Based on findings made by Othman *et al.* (2011) there is a huge difference in the CEO's expectations from the human resource management practitioners in Malaysian organizations. Human resource management practices failed to make the contributions as desired by the CEOs'. The failure to operationalize the human resource management function effectively is one of the foremost reasons for apparent human resource management inadequacy. The present human resource management framework and practices were most certainly inadequate to face the developing difficulties of worldwide rivalry, quality of service and customer satisfaction. The HR department shall not only play an integral role, but human resource management practices need to be more dynamic and be a change motivator to face the thriving challenges of the business environment. For human resource management practices to play an effective role, organizations must do some investment in elevating the human resource management practices' competencies and place human resource management as a top priority (Hassan, 2013).

Research shows that in many organizations, the human resource management professionals are not key members of the top management team. Human resource management still merely plays the second fiddle in the management hierarchy. Znaider and Larsen (2016) recommended for more studies be conducted on the human resource management professionals' representation in the top management. Only in a few organizations, human resource management practitioners sit on the board or lead the organization. In many organizations, managers from finance or marketing or operation normally become the leaders in the organization. Therefore, detailed studies need to be conducted to

understand what the roles are that human resource management practices need to execute to be at the same parity as the aforementioned functions.

Research on human resource management within the SME landscape is a new phenomenon because most human resource management theories and literature are largely concentrated on large enterprises (Reid & Adams, 2001). This is supported by the findings of Williamson (2000) who stated that a review of the three top journals in the USA showed that only 7 out of the 207 articles concentrated on small businesses or used them in their samples. Congruent to these findings, Tansky and Heneman (2003) maintained that SMEs are second class citizens in the dictionary of human resource management researchers. More emphasis on human resource management should be given to SMEs, as a plethora of studies showed a positive correlation between human resource management and organizational performance (Huselid *et al.*, 1997).

Studies have also highlighted the failure of SMEs to discover, attract and pick appropriate employees; losing indispensable employees; recording low production; and providing insufficient training and development of workers that can explain the problems that affect the lifespan of employees in the organization (Brink, Cant, & Ligthelm, 2003). Research evidence has shown that SMEs have a major problem in securing competent employees (Deshpande & Golhar, 1994; Atkinson & Storey, 1994). Sustainable growth of SMEs depends on acquiring and educating high calibre employees (Gamage, 2014). The calibre of workers is the most complicated and significant human resource management requirement in companies. The propensity to recruit and select capable, skilled and dependable workers is the primary building block in achieving sustained competitive advantage (Machado & Melo, 2014). SMEs mainly adopt informal and unstructured staffing and selection practices (Tanova, 2003; Bacon & Hoque, 2005; Lockyer & Scholarios, 2004). This is because SMEs are not employing as much workforce when compared with their larger counterparts. Therefore, the need to recruit, possibly will not be as often and demanding in comparison to large enterprises. Often, there is no specific personnel function; implying that someone in the enterprise does the recruiting and selecting as deemed necessary as part of their regular function (Machado & Melo, 2014).

Only a few research studies have been carried out to find out the outcome of human resource management practices on job satisfaction and employee retention. This was also found to be the case in New Zealand, where there is still some ambiguity with regards to the desired roles that human resource management practitioners must adopt to contribute to the organizations (Sonja, 2019). Ekhsan (2009) reported that it is difficult to find out the actual human resource management roles because the data available was not reliable. Choi and Khairuzzaman (2012) found that human resource management practices lack certain competencies to contribute to companies' performance. However, the study fails to stipulate what are the lacking competencies for job satisfaction and talent retention.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Our review shows that the existing studies on management and human resource management pay little attention to talent management, employee value proposition, and organizational efficiency. Further, no study has investigated the mediating effect of employee value proposition on the relationship between talent management and organizational efficiency. This is unfortunate, especially since talent management has been recently described as a peculiarity that is attempting to move from a developing to a mature stage (Dries, 2013b; Gallardo-Gallardo *et al.*, 2015). Cappelli and Sherer (1991) portrayed the context as "factors associated with units of analysis above those expressly under investigation" (p. 56). Therefore, focusing on the effect of relevant elements in talent management will give an insight into its conceptualization, execution, and adequacy. In short, it will assist us in recognizing and clarifying how and why talent management works in practice relating to management and human resource management, which is in line with 'the fundamental mission of the academic discipline of Human Resource Management (HRM)' (Boxall, Purcell, & Wright, 2007, p. 4).

Besides, meagre literature exists on the efficient management of specialized experts and specialists across the business life cycle (Kim *et al.*, 2014). The most generally known way to deal with overseeing specialized talent is the double-stepping stool framework (Allen and Katz, 1986; Hesketh *et al.*, 1992), yet it is guaranteed that the gap between the idea of the double-stepping stool and its reality is huge (Kim *et al.*, 2014). Advancement for those in the specialized track tends to become a "loyalty" prize rather than genuine professional success (Allen and Katz, 1986). Similarly, the generally extensive processes and replacement costs for managers in specialized or expert fields make recruiting especially challenging. Therefore, organizations are seeking to establish internal labour markets through development to improve the flexibility of talent utilization to improve retention (Wailersak & Suehiro, 2004). To be sure, professional survey data uncovers that talent specialists currently expect more prominent dependence on developing talent from the inside, as a feature of their future talent management methodologies (CIPD, 2017).

Research on talent management has for quite some time been criticised for falling behind the training in offering vision and leadership (Collings *et al.*, 2011; Al Ariss *et al.*, 2014; Cappelli and Keller, 2014). Whilst Industry 4.0 is probably going to set off rapidly and present varying ramifications for talent management, advancements in talent management hypotheses have been generally slow and gradual. For example, albeit the net deficiency of abilities inside the talent framework could be deciphered as a requirement for more prominent expansion in talent management systems (with more consideration on internal improvement rather than external recruitment), the significant attention stays on basically 'fighting harder' in the war for talent. In the advent of Industry 4.0, inevitably this implies giving more consideration and resources in a battle for the talent that does not exist. Company branding is an illustration of this, incorporating and showcasing standards in recruitment practices to develop a 'long-term strategy to manage awareness and perception of

employees, the expectation of employees and related stakeholders' (Backhaus & Tikoo, 2004, P. 501), with a definitive point of fortifying talent attraction.

In an era of rapid digitalization and organizational transformation, there is an added responsibility on organizations to forecast upcoming competencies and skills requisites for organizations. Employers preparing for the challenges of the external environment can create an attractive organizational brand to draw in employees with the capabilities and qualities that will be needed to achieve the company's long-term strategy. However, the possible threat is that a forward-looking organizational brand, which reflects the kind of work or workplace that an organization aspires to make or deliver rather than the one it now exemplifies, creates a gap between interior and external organizational characters. This conceivably triggers issues somewhere else inside the talent management framework, as far as sustenance and commitment of existing talent. Also, to avoid transforming a talent attraction issue into a talent retention problem, organizations should effectively deal with these various personalities and identities (Gioia et al. 2000), through cognizant effort to depict various perspectives to the organizational participants (Cole and Salimath, 2013). Furthermore, this underscores the significance of a holistic and fundamental approach to perceive and effectively deal with the commonly collaborating effects of various parts within essential strategic talent management frameworks. For example, the effect of a talent fascination procedure pointed toward advancing an organization's brand that is adjusted to longer-term strategic destinations should also be considered in terms of its effect on the retention and engagement of existing talent.

Besides, so far, no research has been completed considering employee value proposition in relationship with talent management and organizational efficiency in Malaysia. Therefore, it would merit investigating the effect of talent management on organizational efficiency by considering the employee value proposition (EVP) in the organizations. In doing so, it paves for better-contextualized talent management research that helps to better comprehend its applications. Contextualization recognizes the limits and boundaries that surround the generalizability of the explorative studies (Teagarden, Von Glinow, & Mellahi, 2018). In summary, we contend that contextualizing talent management practices will assist analysis in building the extension in management and human resource management, improving research meticulousness and viable significance (Thunnissen & Gallardo-Gallardo, 2019). This is progressively important and ideal especially given the lack of research on a comprehensive .

6. Acknowledgement and Notes

This paper is part of the PhD thesis of the first author submitted to the City University Malaysia. The first author would like to thank Dr. Ahmad Budiman bin Haji Husain for this supervision during his PhD studies.

7. Funding and Other Information

Part of this paper is funded by the Anhui University of Finance & Economics (Grant No.: ACKYC21089). For details, please contact the corresponding author Qiao, Yuxiang (Email: first21cc@hotmail.com).

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